



Syllabus

Cambridge IGCSE™ (9–1)

Music 0978

Use this syllabus for exams in 2025.
Exams are available in the June series.



Why choose Cambridge International?

Cambridge International prepares school students for life, helping them develop an informed curiosity and a lasting passion for learning. We are part of Cambridge University Press & Assessment, which is a department of the University of Cambridge.

Our Cambridge Pathway gives students a clear path for educational success from age 5 to 19. Schools can shape the curriculum around how they want students to learn – with a wide range of subjects and flexible ways to offer them. It helps students discover new abilities and a wider world, and gives them the skills they need for life, so they can achieve at school, university and work.

Our programmes and qualifications set the global standard for international education. They are created by subject experts, rooted in academic rigour and reflect the latest educational research. They provide a strong platform for learners to progress from one stage to the next, and are well supported by teaching and learning resources.

Our mission is to provide educational benefit through provision of international programmes and qualifications for school education and to be the world leader in this field. Together with schools, we develop Cambridge learners who are confident, responsible, reflective, innovative and engaged – equipped for success in the modern world.

Every year, nearly a million Cambridge students from 10 000 schools in 160 countries prepare for their future with the Cambridge Pathway.

School feedback: ‘We think the Cambridge curriculum is superb preparation for university.’

Feedback from: Christoph Guttentag, Dean of Undergraduate Admissions, Duke University, USA

Quality management



Cambridge International is committed to providing exceptional quality. In line with this commitment, our quality management system for the provision of international qualifications and education programmes for students aged 5 to 19 is independently certified as meeting the internationally recognised standard, ISO 9001:2015. Learn more at www.cambridgeinternational.org/ISO9001

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Important: Changes to this syllabus



For information about changes to this syllabus for 2025, go to page 37.

The latest syllabus is version 1, published September 2022. There are no significant changes which affect teaching.

1 Why choose this syllabus?

Key benefits

Cambridge IGCSE is the world's most popular international qualification for 14 to 16 year olds, although it can be taken by students of other ages. It is tried, tested and trusted.

Students can choose from 70 subjects in any combination – it is taught by over 4500 schools in over 140 countries.

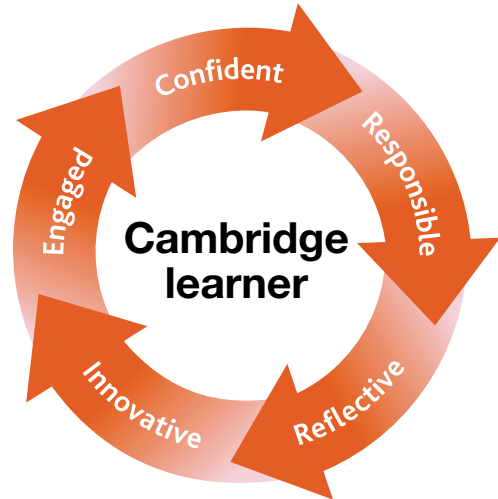
Our programmes balance a thorough knowledge and understanding of a subject and help to develop the skills learners need for their next steps in education or employment.

Cambridge IGCSE (9–1) Music is accepted by universities and employers worldwide as providing proof of musical skills, knowledge and understanding. This syllabus offers students the opportunity to develop their own practical musical skills through performing and composing. They also develop their listening skills by studying music from the main historical periods and styles of Western music as well as from selected non-Western traditions. The emphasis of the syllabus is as much on developing lifelong musical skills as on acquiring knowledge.

Learners studying Cambridge IGCSE (9–1) Music are given the opportunity to:

- listen to and learn about music from a wide range of historical periods and major world cultures
- develop their skills in performing music, both individually and in a group with other musicians
- develop their skills in composing music in a style of their own choice.

Our programmes balance a thorough knowledge and understanding of a subject and help to develop the skills learners need for their next steps in education or employment.



School feedback: ‘The strength of Cambridge IGCSE qualifications is internationally recognised and has provided an international pathway for our students to continue their studies around the world.’

Feedback from: Gary Tan, Head of Schools and CEO, Raffles International Group of Schools, Indonesia

International recognition and acceptance

Our expertise in curriculum, teaching and learning, and assessment is the basis for the recognition of our programmes and qualifications around the world. The combination of knowledge and skills in Cambridge IGCSE (9–1) Music gives learners a solid foundation for further study. Candidates who achieve grades 9 to 4 are well prepared to follow a wide range of courses including Cambridge International AS & A Level Music.

Cambridge IGCSEs are accepted and valued by leading universities and employers around the world as evidence of academic achievement. Many universities require a combination of Cambridge International AS & A Levels and Cambridge IGCSEs or equivalent to meet their entry requirements.

UK NARIC*, the national agency in the UK for the recognition and comparison of international qualifications and skills, has carried out an independent benchmarking study of Cambridge IGCSE and found it to be comparable to the standard of the GCSE in the UK. This means students can be confident that their Cambridge IGCSE qualifications are accepted as equivalent to UK GCSEs by leading universities worldwide.

* Due to the United Kingdom leaving the European Union, the UK NARIC national recognition agency function was re-titled as UK ENIC on 1 March 2021, operated and managed by Ecctis Limited. From 1 March 2021, international benchmarking findings are published under the Ecctis name.

Learn more at www.cambridgeinternational.org/recognition

School feedback: ‘Cambridge IGCSE is one of the most sought-after and recognised qualifications in the world. It is very popular in Egypt because it provides the perfect preparation for success at advanced level programmes.’

Feedback from: Managing Director of British School of Egypt BSE

Supporting teachers

We provide a wide range of resources, detailed guidance, innovative training and professional development so that you can give your students the best possible preparation for Cambridge IGCSE. To find out which resources are available for each syllabus go to our School Support Hub.

The School Support Hub is our secure online site for Cambridge teachers where you can find the resources you need to deliver our programmes. You can also keep up to date with your subject and the global Cambridge community through our online discussion forums.

Find out more at www.cambridgeinternational.org/support

Support for Cambridge IGCSE			
Planning and preparation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Schemes of work Specimen papers Syllabuses Teacher guides 	Teaching and assessment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Endorsed resources Online forums Support for coursework and speaking tests 	Learning and revision <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Example candidate responses Past papers and mark schemes Specimen paper answers 	Results <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Candidate Results Service Principal examiner reports for teachers Results Analysis

Sign up for email notifications about changes to syllabuses, including new and revised products and services at www.cambridgeinternational.org/syllabusupdates

Professional development

We support teachers through:

- Introductory Training – face-to-face or online
- Extension Training – face-to-face or online
- Enrichment Professional Development – face-to-face or online

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- Cambridge Professional Development Qualifications

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Supporting exams officers

We provide comprehensive support and guidance for all Cambridge exams officers.

Find out more at: www.cambridgeinternational.org/eoguide

2 Syllabus overview

Aims

The aims describe the purposes of a course based on this syllabus.

The aims are to enable students to:

- enable candidates to acquire and consolidate a range of basic musical skills, knowledge and understanding, through the activities of listening, performing and composing
- help candidates develop a perceptive and critical response to the main historical periods and styles of Western music
- help candidates to recognise and understand the music of selected non-Western traditions, and thus to form an appreciation of cultural similarities and differences
- provide a foundation for the development of an informed appreciation of music
- provide a foundation for further study in music at a higher level.

Cambridge Assessment International Education is an education organisation and politically neutral. The contents of this syllabus, examination papers and associated materials do not endorse any political view. We endeavour to treat all aspects of the exam process neutrally.



Content overview

When studying the Cambridge IGCSE (9–1) Music syllabus, learners listen to, perform and compose music, encouraging aesthetic and emotional development, self-discipline and, importantly, creativity. As a result, learners enhance their appreciation and enjoyment of music, an achievement that forms an ideal foundation for future study and enhances lifelong musical enjoyment.

Learners study music of all styles; each style is placed in its historical and cultural context, and learners are encouraged to be perceptive, sensitive and critical when listening. Although the majority of the syllabus examines Western European music, the music of other cultures is always represented.

Assessment overview

All candidates take three components. Candidates will be eligible for grades 9 to 1, where 9 is the highest grade.

All candidates take:

Component 1 c.1 hour 15 minutes
Listening 40%
70 marks
Written examination based on audio recordings supplied by Cambridge International
Externally assessed

and:

Component 2 Coursework
Performing 30%
50 marks
Two prepared performances, one individual and one ensemble
Internally marked and externally moderated

and:

Component 3 Coursework
Composing 30%
100 marks scaled to 50 marks
Two contrasting compositions
Internally marked and externally moderated

Information on availability is in the **Before you start** section.

Check the samples database at www.cambridgeinternational.org/samples for submission information, forms and deadlines for Components 2 and 3.

Assessment objectives

The assessment objectives (AOs) are:

AO1 Listening

- Aural awareness, perception and discrimination in relation to Western music.
- Identifying and commenting on a range of music from cultures in different countries.
- Knowledge and understanding of one World Focus from a non-Western culture and one Western Set Work.

AO2 Performing

- Technical competence on one or more instruments.
- Interpretative understanding of the music performed.

AO3 Composing

- Discrimination and imagination in free composition.
- Notation, using staff notation and, if appropriate, other suitable systems.

Weighting for assessment objectives

The approximate weightings allocated to each of the assessment objectives (AOs) are summarised below.

Assessment objectives as a percentage of the qualification

Assessment objective	Weighting in IGCSE %
AO1 Listening	c.40
AO2 Performing	c.30
AO3 Composing	c.30
Total	100

Assessment objectives as a percentage of each component

Assessment objective	Weighting in components %		
	Component 1	Component 2	Component 3
AO1 Listening	100	0	0
AO2 Performing	0	100	0
AO3 Composing	0	0	100
Total	100	100	100

3 Subject content

This syllabus gives you the flexibility to design a course that will interest, challenge and engage your learners. Where appropriate you are responsible for selecting topics, subject contexts, resources and examples to support your learners' study. These should be appropriate for the learners' age, cultural background and learning context as well as complying with your school policies and local legal requirements.

The subject content described here is the content of Component 1 Listening.

Listening

Candidates should be taught to recognise and describe (where appropriate) the musical features on the following list, which provides a clear indication of the range of knowledge expected in this paper. Extracts may come from any genre, but candidates will only be expected to identify the genres shown. The Set Works and the World Focus may have specific features which are not included in this general list, but these will be highlighted in the *Teachers' Guide to Set Works and the World Focus*.

Rudiments

Standard staff notation including dynamic, tempo and expression markings, simple ornaments and articulation signs, treble, bass and alto clefs, key signatures up to 4 sharps and 4 flats in major and minor keys, time signatures, major, minor and perfect intervals.

Melody and rhythm

Major, minor, chromatic, whole-tone and pentatonic scales. Blue notes. Melodic movement (ascending or descending by step or leap). Phrasing. Call and response. Duple, triple or irregular metre. Syncopation, swing, polyrhythm.

Harmony

Primary chords: I, IV, and V⁽⁷⁾; secondary chords: II and VI. Perfect, imperfect and interrupted cadences. Modulations to related keys (sub-dominant, dominant, relative minor, relative major).

Ensembles and instruments/voices

Western ensembles and instruments: orchestras, jazz bands, choirs and chamber music ensembles. The main instruments and voices used in the above ensembles.

Keyboard instruments: piano, harpsichord, organ.

World ensembles and instruments: Indonesian: gamelan; African and Arab: *rabāb*, *kora*, xylophone, 'ūd;

Indian: *bansuri*, *sitar*, *sārangī*, *tablā*; Chinese: *ch'in*, *dizi*, *erh-hu*; Japanese: *shakuhachi*, *koto*, *shō*;

Latin American: *bandoneon*, pan-pipes, *charangos*, guitars.

Instrumental and/or vocal effects

Arco, pizzicato, glissando, tremolo, double stopping, strumming, pitch bending, mute, roll, melisma.

Structure

Binary, ternary, rondo, theme and variations, ground bass.

Compositional devices

Repetition, imitation, sequence, canon, ostinato, drone, Alberti bass, pedal (tonic and dominant), contrary motion.

Texture

Melody and accompaniment, homophonic, polyphonic, monophonic, heterophonic, parallel motion.

Style

Baroque, Classical, Romantic, Music since 1900 (including impressionism, neo-classicism, jazz, minimalism).

Genre

Opera, oratorio (including recitative, aria and chorus), musical, symphony, concerto, string quartet, sonata, march, waltz, minuet and trio.

4 Details of the assessment

Candidates complete three compulsory components:

Component 1 Listening	(c.40%)
Component 2 Performing	(c.30%)
Component 3 Composing	(c.30%)

A *Music Coursework Handbook* is available and provides the opportunity for teachers/examiners to practise assessing the Performing and Composing examinations before they undertake their first live tests.

Component 1 – Listening

Written paper, c.1 hour 15 minutes, 70 marks

This component is based on audio recordings supplied by Cambridge International. It is assumed that centres will have equipment to play audio of reasonable quality, capable of reproducing the bass clearly.

The extracts or pieces played will be from a wide range of styles and traditions. The questions test understanding and perception of the music. Candidates are expected to follow any complete or skeleton scores or diagrams provided. All questions in Sections A, B and C are compulsory and will either require short answers or will be in a multiple-choice format.

Extracts in Sections A, B and C will be played **four** times; extracts in Section D will be played **twice**.

In Sections A, B and C, candidates may be asked questions relating to rudiments, melody and rhythm, harmony (including recognition of chords, keys and cadences), ensembles, instruments and instrumental effects, structure, compositional devices, texture, style or genre, as appropriate to the music.

The main focus of each section is as follows:

Section A: Unprepared Western Repertoire [16 marks]

Extracts from two works which may be instrumental and/or vocal composed in the Baroque, Classical or Romantic periods or since 1900. In addition to questions on the areas listed above, candidates may also be required to identify the period and/or suggest a possible composer.

Section B: World Music [22 marks]

Extracts from three pieces of music. Two of the pieces (6 marks each) will be selected from African and Arab, Latin American, Chinese, Japanese, Indian and Indonesian traditions.

In addition to questions on the areas listed above, candidates will also be required to identify the possible continent/country or origin.

The third piece (10 marks) will be taken from the World Focus prescribed each year from the non-Western music traditions.

World Focus for examination in 2025 – Chinese Music

In the examination, candidates will be tested on a range of knowledge and understanding of the prescribed World Focus. Although the precise nature of questions will depend on the individual characteristics of the country or area, candidates should be prepared to answer questions under the following main headings:

- instruments and effects
- melody and rhythm
- texture
- structure
- general background information about the context of each country or area.

Candidates will not be assessed on spelling, providing the meaning of their answers is clear.

Further information on the World Focus topic is available in the *Teachers' Guide to Set Works and the World Focus*. It is essential that centres download this document from www.cambridgeinternational.org, as it contains details of the vocabulary, specific instruments and other contextual information that candidates may be asked about in the examination.

The *Teachers' Guide* will be updated for each year of examination.

Section C: Skeleton Score [16 marks]

A single extract with skeleton score. In addition to questions on the areas listed above, candidates will be expected to undertake simple rhythmic and/or melodic dictation. They may also be required to identify the period of the music and/or to suggest the name of a likely composer.

Section D: Set Work [16 marks]

Candidates are expected to have prepared one Set Work.

For their chosen work, candidates will hear two extracts (played twice). A skeleton score of the extracts will be provided in the question paper. Candidates will be expected to answer questions on any aspect of the music in the extract (whether or not it is shown in the skeleton score); there may also be questions on the music which comes before or after the extract itself.

Set Works for examination in 2025:

EITHER

Beethoven: *Symphony No. 5 in C minor* (Movements 3 and 4)

OR

Haydn: *Trumpet Concerto in E flat*

General observations

It is most important that candidates are able to hear their Set Work as often as possible, so that they become thoroughly familiar with the music primarily through listening. Recordings should therefore always be available to them in school. Wherever possible, it is also desirable for candidates to have their own copy of a recording, so that they can listen at home as well. With this in mind, every effort has been made to ensure that all the Set Works are available on good quality but inexpensive recordings (e.g. those issued on the Naxos label). The importance of experiencing the sound of the music at first hand cannot be stressed too much.

In the examination, candidates will be tested on a range of knowledge and understanding of their chosen work. Although the precise nature of questions will depend upon the individual characteristics of the work concerned, candidates should be prepared to answer questions under the following main headings:

- structure and terminology
- themes and their transformations
- key centres and modulations
- identification of chords
- instruments
- transposition
- score markings, performance directions, instrumental effects
- general background information about the context and genre of each work.

Further information on the Set Works is available in the *Teachers' Guide to Set Works and the World Focus*. It is essential that centres download this document from www.cambridgeinternational.org, as it contains information that candidates may be asked about in the examination.

The *Teachers' Guide* will be updated for each year of examination.

Component 2 – Performing

Internally marked/externally moderated coursework, 50 marks

Component 2 consists of prepared performances of the candidate's own choice, all of which must be recorded.

Candidates must:

(i) sing or play *individually* – either one piece or two short contrasting pieces (which should be on the same instrument)

and

(ii) sing or play *in an ensemble* – either one piece or two short contrasting pieces (which should be on the same instrument – but this does not need to be the same instrument as that offered for individual performing).

The total playing time should be between 4 and 10 minutes.

The music performed should be appropriate, in its technical and musical demands, to the candidate's stage of development at the time of the examination. Positive credit is given for the following:

- (a) the range of technical and musical skills demonstrated
- (b) accuracy of playing the notes and rhythm (in notated music) *OR* quality of improvisation (in music that is not notated)
- (c) choice and control of tempo (in an individual performance) *OR* ensemble coordination (in an ensemble performance)
- (d) sensitivity to phrasing and expression
- (e) technical control of the instrument.

An individual performance may be either unaccompanied or accompanied (but the accompaniment should be played if the composer wrote one and a suitable accompanist is available). Any accompaniment may be live or through a backing track. Singers who choose to accompany themselves (e.g. on the guitar) should be assessed for their singing only.

An ensemble should consist of two or more *live* performers, and the candidate's part may not be consistently doubled by any other performer. Pianists may offer accompaniment; duos are allowed provided the candidate's part demonstrates genuine ensemble skills and could not also be counted as a solo. Candidates should ensure that they do not offer as an ensemble any piece that could be presented as their individual performance, e.g. a flautist playing with piano accompaniment would count as an individual performance for the flautist. The other musicians in an ensemble do not also have to be candidates for the examination. Backing tracks and/or multi-tracking must not be used in any part of the ensemble performance.

If centres are in any doubt about the suitability of the proposed repertoire, contact Cambridge International through either info@cambridgeinternational.org or the discussion forum on the School Support Hub.

Marking criteria

The total for this component is 50 marks. Each performance will be marked out of 25, a maximum of 5 marks being awarded for each of the following five criteria.

(a) The range of technical and musical skills demonstrated

When assessing candidates' performing skills under this heading, two factors must be taken into account:

- the technical difficulty of the music
- the candidate's ability to perform it successfully.

Candidates should perform music that is appropriate, in its technical and musical demands, to their stage of development at the time of the examination. There is nothing to be gained by attempting music that is too difficult for them to perform successfully. That is why the emphasis of this assessment criterion is placed on the range of candidates' technical and musical skills, rather than simply giving credit for the difficulty of the music they perform.

A copy of the sheet music of performances must be submitted for all pieces where it is available in print. If the candidate has intentionally altered their performance from the sheet music, this must be clearly indicated – the teacher should take account of any alteration, which makes a piece easier to play, in the marking.

The following lists give guidance, for selected instruments, about the difficulty of music that should attract certain levels of marks under this heading, provided that candidates are able to perform it successfully.

Reference to graded examinations should be taken to mean music of the typical level at the given grade in the syllabuses of the standard graded examining boards (e.g. the Associated Board, Trinity Guildhall).

Instrument	Mark level	Examples of technical demand
Piano	1	Single notes in each hand, long notes only in LH. Very simple keys, few accidentals, no modulation. Minimal scope for interpretation.
	2	Mostly single notes in each hand, but with a little rhythmic independence. Simple keys, a few accidentals, very simple modulation. Little scope for interpretation.
	3	Generally two notes in each hand or greater rhythmic independence or RH melody with LH Alberti bass. Music requiring a wider variety of articulation and sensitivity to dynamics and phrasing.
	4	Approximately Grade 3 standard. Music requiring some more sophisticated interpretation.
	5	At least Grade 4 standard. Music with a range of technical challenges and requiring some interpretative insight.

Instrument	Mark level	Examples of technical demand
Electronic Keyboard	1	Single notes in one hand only, slow-moving auto chords. Very simple keys, few accidentals, no modulation. Minimal scope for interpretation.
	2	Single notes in RH with fingered auto chords in LH. Simple keys, a few accidentals, very simple modulation. Little scope for interpretation.
	3	Played parts in RH and LH involving up to 2/3 notes in one hand. Moderate tempo, with some varied use of auto facilities. Music requiring a wider variety of articulation and sensitivity to dynamics and phrasing.
	4	Approximately Grade 3 (electronic organ) standard, or involving difficulties equivalent to those required for piano.
	5	At least Grade 4 (electronic organ) standard, or involving difficulties equivalent to those required for piano. Music with a range of technical challenges and requiring some interpretative insight.
Recorder	1	Middle-range notes only, mostly stepwise movement. Very simple keys, few accidentals, no modulation. Minimal scope for interpretation.
	2	Wider in range, with a few of the easier pinched notes. Simple keys, a few accidentals, very simple modulation. Little scope for interpretation.
	3	Ranging from the lowest note to some of the harder pinched notes, and with some more awkward leaps. Music requiring a wider variety of articulation and sensitivity to dynamics and phrasing.
	4	Approximately Grade 3 standard. Music requiring some more sophisticated interpretation.
	5	At least Grade 4 standard. Music with a range of technical challenges and requiring some interpretative insight.
Guitar	1	Simple chords, slow-moving and strummed. Very simple keys, few accidentals, no modulation. Minimal scope for interpretation.
	2	Simple chords, changing faster, strummed. Simple keys, a few accidentals, very simple modulation. Little scope for interpretation.
	3	Introducing some harder chords, and with some RH technique. Music requiring a wider variety of articulation and sensitivity to dynamics and phrasing.
	4	Approximately Grade 3 standard. Music requiring some more sophisticated interpretation.
	5	At least Grade 4 standard. Music with a range of technical challenges and requiring some interpretative insight.

Instrument	Mark level	Examples of technical demand
Bass Guitar	1	All in first position, often using open strings and moving mainly between adjacent strings. Very simple keys, few accidentals, no modulation. Minimal scope for interpretation.
	2	All in first position with some basic legato and staccato playing. Simple keys, a few accidentals, very simple modulation. Little scope for interpretation.
	3	Some changes of position with a variety of articulation. Music requiring sensitivity to dynamics and phrasing.
	4	Approximately Grade 3 standard. Music requiring some more sophisticated interpretation (e.g. slapped and pulled notes, slides and bends).
	5	At least Grade 4 standard. Music with a range of technical challenges and requiring some interpretative insight.
Woodwind	1	Easy register and key, avoiding any 'break', single-note tonguing. Very simple keys, few accidentals, no modulation. Minimal scope for interpretation.
	2	Easy register and key, with some legato tonguing. Simple keys, a few accidentals, very simple modulation. Little scope for interpretation.
	3	A few notes in a more difficult register, and with more complex tonguing/phrasing. Music requiring a wider variety of articulation and sensitivity to dynamics and phrasing.
	4	Approximately Grade 3 standard. Music requiring some more sophisticated interpretation.
	5	At least Grade 4 standard. Music with a range of technical challenges and requiring some interpretative insight.
Brass	1	Easy register and key, mostly 'fanfare' (1st harmonic) movements. Very simple keys, few accidentals, no modulation. Minimal scope for interpretation.
	2	Easy register and key, some easy stepwise movement. Simple keys, a few accidentals, very simple modulation. Little scope for interpretation.
	3	In a rather less easy register, and with a little semitone movement. Music requiring a wider variety of articulation and sensitivity to dynamics and phrasing.
	4	Approximately Grade 3 standard. Music requiring some more sophisticated interpretation.
	5	At least Grade 4 standard. Music with a range of technical challenges and requiring some interpretative insight.

Instrument	Mark level	Examples of technical demand
Orchestral Strings	1	All in first position, with no extensions. Very simple keys, few accidentals, no modulation. Minimal scope for interpretation.
	2	All in first position, but with some easy extensions. Simple keys, a few accidentals, very simple modulation. Little scope for interpretation.
	3	Not all in first position, and with some leaps across strings. Music requiring a wider variety of articulation and sensitivity to dynamics and phrasing.
	4	Approximately Grade 3 standard. Music requiring some more sophisticated interpretation.
	5	At least Grade 4 standard. Music with a range of technical challenges and requiring some interpretative insight.
Glockenspiel, etc.	1	Single notes, with no wide leaps. Very simple keys, few accidentals, no modulation. Minimal scope for interpretation.
	2	Requiring two beaters, with some two-note chords and wider leaps. Simple keys, a few accidentals, very simple modulation. Little scope for interpretation.
	3	Requiring two beaters, and with some rhythmically independent movement. Music requiring a wider variety of articulation and sensitivity to dynamics and phrasing.
	4	Approximately Grade 3 (tuned percussion) standard. Music requiring some more sophisticated interpretation.
	5	At least Grade 4 (tuned percussion) standard. Music with a range of technical challenges and requiring some interpretative insight.
Drum Kit	1	Very simple rhythms, usually repetitive, using bass drum, snare drum and cymbal. Minimal scope for interpretation.
	2	More complex rhythms, generally repetitive, using bass drum, snare drum and cymbal. Little scope for interpretation.
	3	More complex rhythms, with less reliance on repetition. Use of the hi-hat pedal in addition to other instruments. Music requiring sensitivity to dynamics, and using standard conventions such as fills where appropriate.
	4	Approximately Grade 3 (drum kit) standard. Music requiring some more sophisticated interpretation.
	5	At least Grade 4 (drum kit) standard. Music with a range of technical challenges and requiring some interpretative insight.
Voice	1	A simple song or hymn, mostly stepwise in an easy register. Very simple keys, few accidentals, no modulation. Minimal scope for interpretation.
	2	A simple song or hymn, with no awkward intervals. Simple keys, a few accidentals, very simple modulation. Little scope for interpretation.
	3	A more complex song with some more awkward intervals or a rather more testing tessitura. Music requiring sensitivity to dynamics and phrasing.
	4	Approximately Grade 3 standard. Music requiring some more sophisticated interpretation.
	5	At least Grade 4 standard. Music with a range of technical challenges and requiring some interpretative insight.

When electronic keyboards and other electronic equipment are used, the criteria should be taken to include the musical use made of the available facilities and the skills required. It is the candidate's input that must always be the prime concern. Multi-tracking is not permitted for the submitted performances. Details of all such equipment, together with the facilities used, must be given on the *Performing Working Mark Sheet*. These forms, and the instructions for completing them, may be downloaded from www.cambridgeinternational.org/samples

(b) Accuracy of playing the notes and rhythm (in notated music)

Do candidates know the music well enough to play fluently, without undue hesitancy? Even if there are technical shortcomings, is there evidence that candidates understand how the music is meant to go?

OR

Quality of improvisation (non-notated music)

Are candidates able to improvise fluently on the basis of the given materials? Is there a sense of direction and purpose in the improvisation, or does it repeat itself too much, producing an effect of aimless meandering?

(c) Choice and control of tempo/ensemble coordination

Are candidates able to set a suitable tempo for the music and maintain it throughout the performance, allowing for any *rubato* that may be essential to the style of the music? Are there fluctuations of tempo that are not required by the style of the music, but which may reveal technical problems? If they are performing to a backing track (solo performances only), is the performance well coordinated with the backing track?

(d) Sensitivity to phrasing and expression

How well do candidates realise any markings written into the score by the composer (e.g. dynamics, articulation, ornaments)? In music which is not notated, have candidates given due consideration to issues such as the need for dynamic variety? How sensitive is their phrasing? To what extent are they able to bring the music to life in their performances?

(e) Technical control of the instrument

Are candidates able to perform with suitable quality, variety and evenness of tone? How well do they handle the specific factors which apply to their instruments (e.g. coordination of RH/LH, bow/fingers, tongue/fingers; intonation; breath control; balance; diction; pedalling; registration)?

Marking criteria – Performing

A mark out of 5 must be awarded under each of the following headings.

Note: Do not award half marks.

(a) The range of technical and musical skills demonstrated

Refer to the guidance (**Examples of technical demand**, pages 13–16) given under each instrument type when awarding a mark in this category. The mark will generally correspond to the mark level given in the guidance, however if the music is too difficult for the candidate and the skills demonstrated are therefore compromised, the mark should be reduced.

Descriptor	Marks
A wide range of well-developed skills, allowing the candidate to perform music which makes substantial demands.	5
	4
A range of moderately developed skills, allowing the candidate to perform music of moderate difficulty.	3
	2
A narrow range of modest skills, allowing the candidate to perform music which makes very simple demands.	1
An inadequate range of very basic skills, allowing the candidate to perform at an elementary level.	0

(b) Accuracy of notes and rhythm OR Quality of improvisation

Descriptor	Marks
Entirely accurate and consistently maintained throughout <i>OR</i> a high quality of fluent improvising.	5
	4*
Moderately accurate, but with several passages spoilt by hesitation <i>OR</i> a moderate quality of fairly fluent improvising.	3
	2†
Very inaccurate and hesitant throughout the performance <i>OR</i> a poor quality of aimless improvising.	1
Hardly any accurate notes or rhythms <i>OR</i> hardly any evidence of an ability to improvise.	0

* Award 4 if the performance contains too many errors for full marks (full marks may be awarded where there are a few small slips), but is more accurate than is suggested by 3.

† Award 2 where there are some accurate passages, but where the overall level of accuracy is poor and/or the performance is hesitant.

(c) Choice and control of tempo (in individual performing) OR ensemble coordination (in ensemble performing)

If the performance submitted by the candidate as an ensemble is in fact a second solo (see page 12), award a mark of 0.

Descriptor	Marks
An entirely appropriate choice of tempo, consistently maintained throughout the performance <i>OR</i> excellent coordination with the backing track (individual performing only) <i>OR</i> excellent ensemble coordination.	5
	4*
Choice of tempo not wholly appropriate and with some fluctuations <i>OR</i> moderate coordination with the backing track (individual performing only) <i>OR</i> moderate ensemble coordination.	3
	2†
An inappropriate choice of tempo, with many fluctuations throughout the performance <i>OR</i> poor coordination with the backing track (individual performing only) <i>OR</i> poor ensemble coordination.	1
No sense of a consistent tempo <i>OR</i> no sense of coordination with the backing track (individual performing only) <i>OR</i> no sense of ensemble.	0

* Award 4 in individual performing if the tempo is correct but there are some small fluctuations or if the tempo is not quite correct but is maintained consistently. In ensemble performing award 4 where the rhythmic coordination is good, and the phrasing, articulation and balance are mostly well matched but perhaps with a small area of weakness.

† Award 2 in individual performing if the tempo is more seriously inappropriate and/or there are more frequent fluctuations than 3 suggests. In ensemble performing award 2 where there are more serious problems with rhythmic coordination, and the other areas are not well matched.

(d) Sensitivity to phrasing and expression

Descriptor	Marks
Suitably phrased and fully effective in expression.	5
	4*
Moderately well phrased and fairly effective in expression.	3
	2†
Little account taken of phrasing and expression.	1
No phrasing or expression evident.	0

* Award 4 if the music is effectively phrased but with less attention to dynamics and articulation than would be needed to gain full marks.

† Award 2 where the phrasing is reasonably effective but expression and/or articulation have been ignored.

(e) Technical control of the instrument

Descriptor	Marks
Very good technical control.	5
	4*
Moderately good technical control.	3
	2†
Generally weak technical control.	1
Not in control of the instrument.	0

* Award 4 if, e.g. the tone quality appropriate to the instrument is not sufficiently developed to gain full marks (but other areas of technique are strong) or there is a minor area of technical weakness.

† Award 2 if, e.g. tone quality is poorer and/or there are problems with some of the other technical factors appropriate to the instrument.

Add together the marks under each heading to give the **TOTAL MARK out of 25 for Individual Performing.**

Add together the marks under each heading to give the **TOTAL MARK out of 25 for Ensemble Performing.**

Add the two total marks together to give the **GRAND TOTAL MARK out of 50 for PERFORMING.**

The Grand Total Mark must be checked against the Overall Descriptors and mark bands below. If the marks achieved by a consideration of the Individual Marking Criteria are correct, they will be compatible with the Overall Descriptors. If they are not, the individual marks should be revisited.

Overall Descriptors	Marks
Performances which are consistently excellent in musicianship and control of technique, communicating a very high level of musical understanding of the music in programmes made up of pieces demanding the most highly developed skills expected at this level.	43–50
Performances which are very good in musicianship and control of technique, communicating a high level of musical understanding of the music in programmes made up of pieces demanding well-developed skills for a performance at this level (but lacking the consistent excellence to be placed in the highest category).	35–42
Performances which are fairly good in most respects, demonstrating a developing level of musicianship and technique, communicating a good general understanding of the styles represented in an appropriate combination of pieces (but less even in quality than the higher categories or with some limitations of technique or musicianship).	27–34
Performances which are good in some respects, though more limited in musicianship and/or technique, communicating a restricted understanding of the music in programmes which may not be altogether appropriate to the candidate (or which may be rather narrow in the range of musical or technical skills demonstrated).	19–26
Performances in which limitations of technique or musicianship are significant enough to impede the communication of musical understanding in some important respects in pieces which offer only limited opportunities to display technical and musical skills.	11–18
Performances which display significant weaknesses in musicianship or technique, and in which there may be relatively little evidence of musical understanding.	1–10
No creditable qualities in the work presented.	0

Component 3 – Composing

Internally marked and externally moderated coursework, 50 marks

Candidates submit two compositions, written for different instruments and/or voices, which must be recorded.

Composition 1 must be written in a Western, tonal style and must demonstrate familiarity with the basic principles of traditional harmonic language; this composition must be fully notated using staff notation and the score must be submitted with the recording.

Composition 2 may be in any style of the candidate's choice and may be notated in whatever form of notation is appropriate to the music. If staff notation is not used, the intentions of the notation must be clearly explained in an accompanying commentary. The score and commentary (if applicable) must be submitted with the recording.

Notation may be either handwritten or computer generated, but all scores must be accurately edited. If notations other than staff notation are submitted, they must be accurately designed to show the duration of the sounds represented by whatever symbols are used (e.g. guitar chord symbols on their own do not show duration). Alternative notation should not be used for any piece which is capable of being notated in staff notation.

Teachers must certify that the compositions are the individual work of the candidate who claims authorship.

Candidates will be given positive credit for:

- (a) their ideas.
- (b) the structure of their compositions.
- (c) their use of the chosen medium.
- (d) compositional technique.
- (e) score presentation/notation.

Marking criteria

Candidates must submit two contrasting compositions. These are assessed by centres and submitted to Cambridge International for moderation.

In assessing compositions, centres should concentrate on candidates' responses to specific key areas of the composing process, summarised in the following assessment criteria. Each composition is assessed out of a maximum of 50 marks, a maximum of 10 marks being awarded for each criterion.

(a) Ideas

This criterion is concerned with basic elements of composing: the quality of melodic writing and the effectiveness of rhythm. In basic terms this area deals with the 'raw materials' of a composition rather than the use made of them by the candidate.

Handling of ideas (referred to in the following descriptors) concerns the way in which candidates use the ideas within a composition. Is there sufficient variety and contrast between ideas? Is the quality of invention consistent throughout the composition?

(b) Structure

This criterion concerns candidates' abilities to use the ideas they have produced to create a coherent and organised composition. Credit should be given for clear evidence that important features of structure have been understood in terms of sectional contrasts, links between sections and the conception of a broad overview of each composition. In this area, all aspects of structure should be considered: the small-scale aspects (relationships between phrase lengths, for example) and the broader view (the overall structures and coherence of the composition).

(c) Use of medium

This criterion concerns the ways in which candidates make use of instrumental resources – candidates' selection of sounds and their handling of different textures within the composition. Aspects to be assessed include candidates' choice of resources; writing for specific instrumental combinations; selection of sounds and evidence of aural awareness revealed in the composition.

Candidates are expected to have some sense of the appropriateness of what they write for the instruments/voices they have chosen to use. Care should be taken to ensure that the range of instrumental/vocal parts does not exceed the normal range of the instrument/voice concerned. It is vital for candidates to hear what they have written down because it provides them with opportunities to translate written notation into sound.

Compositions that maintain a single musical texture without variety will often display a lack of compositional understanding, and it is expected that most candidates should be able to appreciate the need to vary the texture within the pieces of music that they compose.

(d) Compositional technique

This criterion assesses the ways in which candidates make use of the basic 'raw material' of music in their compositions. Aspects to be assessed include candidates' understanding of the ways in which basic ideas can be extended, developed and combined; the exploration and utilisation of standard composing devices such as sequence, inversion, drones, and the manipulation of techniques on a broader scale to produce an aesthetically pleasing composition.

Centres must also consider the element of harmony, whether explicit (as in the piano accompaniment to an instrumental melody) or implicit (as in the case of an unaccompanied song or solo instrumental line). Aspects of harmonic appropriateness in relation to the melodic line and the progression of chords can provide evidence of candidates' aural awareness of the relationship between linear (melodic) and vertical (harmonic) aspects of their compositions.

(e) Score presentation/notation

Candidates are required to submit compositions in the form of notated scores and an audio recording. In cases where the score is not submitted in standard staff notation, the recording must be accompanied by a detailed commentary explaining the system of notation used. In all scores, performance indications should be clear and precise. Assessors should credit work that displays evidence of a careful and intelligent attempt to notate musical ideas and which pays close attention to details of performance, regardless of the notation medium; they should assess how effectively candidates are able to record their aural imagination in terms of written signs and symbols.

Marking criteria – Composing

A mark out of 10 must be awarded under each of the following headings.

Note: Do not award half marks.

(a) Ideas

Descriptor	Marks
Musical and imaginative ideas that suggest a keen sense of aural awareness and are handled in a convincing and intelligent manner.	9–10
Some imaginative musical ideas, showing a secure sense of musical inventiveness, but perhaps lacking in range. Handling of materials may display some weakness and/or inconsistency.	7–8
Reasonable musical ideas displaying some aspects of inventiveness, but not always securely or consistently handled.	4–6
Only a small range of simple ideas displayed, showing awkwardness in the handling of material.	1–3
No creditable musical ideas.	0

(b) Structure

Descriptor	Marks
Clear and appropriate structure, with inventive use of elements creating contrast and continuity in the composition as a whole.	9–10
Effective in overall structure, with good attention to aspects of contrast and continuity, although showing some imbalance between sections.	7–8
Reasonable attention to structure, although perhaps over-reliant on repetition and limited in its sense of the overall concept.	4–6
Structure evident in some clear sections, but with obvious imbalances, and a limited use of contrast and continuity.	1–3
No creditable structure.	0

(c) Use of medium

If both pieces are written for identical instrument(s)/voice(s), a mark of 0 in this category must be awarded for composition 2.

Descriptor	Marks
Idiomatic use of resources throughout, displaying strong aural awareness and revealing a broad range of inventive and varied textures.	9–10
Effective use of resources overall, and displaying a good range of textures, although lacking elements of imagination and/or invention in places.	7–8
Reasonable use of resources; a fair range of workable textures, with some consideration of detail, but with notable impracticalities in balance or occasional passages of awkward writing.	4–6
Some evidence of awkwardness in the use of resources, and keeping to very simple textures and narrow registers, with restricted use of textural variety.	1–3
No creditable use of medium.	0

(d) Compositional technique

Descriptor	Marks
Fully appropriate harmonisation; inventive and confident use of techniques to extend, develop and connect ideas.	9–10
Appropriate harmonisation; effective use of techniques to develop and connect ideas, showing good aural familiarity across a range of relevant techniques.	7–8
Moderately successful harmonisation; reasonable and generally secure use of techniques to extend and/or develop ideas, although perhaps using stock devices across a limited range.	4–6
Less successful harmonisation; some attempt to use techniques to develop or extend ideas, but revealing only a limited aural imagination across a relatively narrow range of techniques.	1–3
No creditable compositional technique.	0

(e) Score presentation/notation

Descriptor	Marks
Clear, articulate and well-presented score/commentary with few mistakes or omissions, showing consistent attention to musical detail.	9–10
Coherent and clear score/commentary, but missing some detail, and perhaps with occasional ambiguities, inaccuracies or omissions.	7–8
Mostly accurate score/commentary, but lacking attention to detail (e.g. omitted dynamics) and to clear presentation (poor clarity, clumsy arrangement of details).	4–6
Mostly accurate score/commentary, but with frequent ambiguities in rhythm, pitch and layout. Poor attention paid to performance instructions.	1–3
No creditable score presentation/notation.	0

Add the marks under each heading to give the **TOTAL MARK out of 50 for each individual composition.**

Add the marks for each individual composition to give the **GRAND TOTAL MARK out of 100 for both compositions.**

The Total Mark for each composition and the Grand Total Mark out of 100 must be checked against the Overall Descriptors and mark bands below. If the marks achieved by a consideration of the Individual Marking Criteria are correct, they will be compatible with the Overall Descriptors. If they are not, the individual marks should be revisited.

Overall Descriptors	Marks	Equates to total mark in range
Musical and imaginative compositions that display a high level of creative ability and a keen sense of aural perception. There will be evidence of structural understanding and the selection of instrument/sounds and their manipulation will be idiomatic, with keen attention to timbre and balance. Scores/commentaries will be accurate, well-presented and show attention to detail throughout.	43–50	85–100
Compositions that are imaginative and display mainly secure and confident handling of materials, together with an organised approach to overall structure. The compositions will reveal some evidence of idiomatic instrumental writing, although there may be some unevenness in terms of consistent quality of ideas and balance between parts. Scores/commentaries will be well-presented overall, displaying reasonable attention to performing details.	35–42	69–84
Compositions that display evidence of sensible instrumental writing and a creative effort to organise sounds into a coherent and satisfying whole. Aspects of structure and musical ideas may lack imagination and the quality of invention may not be consistent. Scores/commentaries may contain aspects that are ambiguous or contradictory, although the general level of presentation will be accurate and performance indications will be clear.	27–34	53–68
Compositions that display some elements of musical understanding and a degree of aural perception, but are uneven in quality in several assessment areas. Aspects of melodic writing, rhythm and structure may be formulaic and/or repetitive, reflecting little confidence to depart from the security of standard conventions. Scores/commentaries may be rather imprecise in their notation of performance instructions and lack attention to detail in several places.	19–26	37–52
Compositions that display relatively little security and limited musical imagination. There will be little evidence of a consistent attempt to write in an idiomatic manner and/or to explore balance, and the organisation of ideas may suggest that the overall structure of the composition has not been thought through carefully. Scores/commentaries may contain many ambiguities together with consistent imprecision and a lack of attention to detail in providing instructions for performance.	11–18	21–36
Compositions that display little evidence of consistent application or musical understanding. All assessment areas will exhibit consistent evidence of weakness and low levels of achievement. Scores/commentaries will be imprecise throughout and/or incomplete.	1–10	1–20
No creditable qualities in the work presented.	0	0

Making and submitting recordings

Using the samples database

The samples database refers you to key information about administering coursework, speaking tests and examined coursework for each syllabus.

Use the database to find out:

- when and how to submit your marks for moderated coursework and non-coursework tests
- when and how to submit your candidates' work
- which forms to complete and return with your candidates' work.

The samples database at www.cambridgeinternational.org/samples will ask you for:

- your country/territory
- the syllabus code (i.e. 0978 for this syllabus).

The database will then take you to the information you need, including dates and methods of submission of candidates' marks and work, as well as any forms you may need to complete.

Recording and submitting candidates' marks and work

Please refer to the samples database at www.cambridgeinternational.org/samples for information, dates and methods of submission of candidates' marks and work. You should follow the instructions for Component 2 Performing and Component 3 Composing on the samples database.

You should record marks on the required form which you should download each year from the samples database at www.cambridgeinternational.org/samples. Follow the instructions on the form to complete it. The marks on this form must be identical to the marks you submit to Cambridge International.

If it is impractical to record a composition using the forces for which it is intended, the recording may be made using different forces that are more readily available (e.g. a piano reduction of a piece for string quartet). It is essential that candidates hear their compositions in performance, even if it cannot be done with the exact forces intended. As a general rule, recordings of live performances (even if they are not completely note-perfect) give moderators a much better impression of the music than performances generated from music technology (e.g. music notation programs or sequencers). However, if it is impossible to record a live performance, sequenced versions may be submitted.

Each performance must be preceded by a spoken introduction giving the candidate's name, number and the titles of the pieces.

Each composition must be preceded by a spoken introduction giving the title of the piece and the details of the candidate.

Please see the *Cambridge Handbook* for the relevant year for more information.

Internal moderation

If more than one teacher in your centre is marking internal assessments, you must make arrangements to moderate or standardise your teachers' marking so that all candidates are assessed to a common standard. (If only one teacher is marking internal assessments, no internal moderation is necessary.) You can find further information on the process of internal moderation in the *Cambridge Handbook* and on the samples database for the relevant year of assessment.

You should record the internally moderated marks for all candidates on the required forms (the Coursework Assessment Summary Form and Working Mark Sheet) and submit these marks to Cambridge International according to the instructions on the samples database at www.cambridgeinternational.org/samples

External moderation

Cambridge International will externally moderate all internally assessed components.

- You must submit the marks of all candidates to Cambridge International.
- You must also submit the marked work of a sample of candidates to Cambridge International.

The sample you submit to Cambridge International should ideally include examples of the marking of each teacher. The samples database at www.cambridgeinternational.org/samples explains how the sample will be selected.

The samples database at www.cambridgeinternational.org/samples also provides details of how to submit the marks and work.

External moderators will produce a short report for each centre with feedback on your marking and administration of the assessment.

5 What else you need to know

This section is an overview of other information you need to know about this syllabus. It will help to share the administrative information with your exams officer so they know when you will need their support. Find more information about our administrative processes at www.cambridgeinternational.org/eoguide

Before you start

Previous study

We recommend that learners starting this course should have as a minimum some background in practical music-making.

Guided learning hours

We design Cambridge IGCSE syllabuses to require about 130 guided learning hours for each subject. This is for guidance only. The number of hours a learner needs to achieve the qualification may vary according to each school and the learners' previous experience of the subject.

Availability and timetables

All Cambridge schools are allocated to one of six administrative zones. Each zone has a specific timetable.

You can view the timetable for your administrative zone at www.cambridgeinternational.org/timetables

You can enter candidates in the June exam series.

Check you are using the syllabus for the year the candidate is taking the exam.

Private candidates cannot enter for this syllabus. For more information, please refer to the *Cambridge Guide to Making Entries*.

Combining with other syllabuses

Candidates can take this syllabus alongside other Cambridge International syllabuses in a single exam series. The only exceptions are:

- Cambridge IGCSE Music (0410)
- syllabuses with the same title at the same level.

Cambridge IGCSE, Cambridge IGCSE (9–1) and Cambridge O Level syllabuses are at the same level.

Making entries

Exams officers are responsible for submitting entries to Cambridge International. We encourage them to work closely with you to make sure they enter the right number of candidates for the right combination of syllabus components. Entry option codes and instructions for submitting entries are in the *Cambridge Guide to Making Entries*. Your exams officer has a copy of this guide.

Exam administration

To keep our exams secure, we produce question papers for different areas of the world, known as administrative zones. We allocate all Cambridge schools to an administrative zone determined by their location. Each zone has a specific timetable. Some of our syllabuses offer candidates different assessment options. An entry option code is used to identify the components the candidate will take relevant to the administrative zone and the available assessment options.

Support for exams officers

We know how important exams officers are to the successful running of exams. We provide them with the support they need to make your entries on time. Your exams officer will find this support, and guidance for all other phases of the Cambridge Exams Cycle, at www.cambridgeinternational.org/eoguide

Retakes and carrying forward marks

Candidates can retake the whole qualification as many times as they want to. Information on retake entries is at www.cambridgeinternational.org/retakes

Candidates cannot resubmit, in whole or in part, performance or compositions from a previous series for remarking.

Marks achieved in Component 2 Performing and Component 3 Composing **cannot** be carried forward to future series. See the regulations for carry forward set out in the *Cambridge Handbook* at www.cambridgeinternational.org/eoguide

Language

This syllabus and the related assessment materials are available in English only.

Accessibility and equality

Syllabus and assessment design

Cambridge International works to avoid direct or indirect discrimination. We develop and design syllabuses and assessment materials to maximise inclusivity for candidates of all national, cultural or social backgrounds and candidates with protected characteristics; these protected characteristics include special educational needs and disability, religion and belief, and characteristics related to gender and identity. In addition, the language and layout used are designed to make our materials as accessible as possible. This gives all candidates the fairest possible opportunity to demonstrate their knowledge, skills and understanding and helps to minimise the requirement to make reasonable adjustments during the assessment process.

Access arrangements

Access arrangements (including modified papers) are the principal way in which Cambridge International complies with our duty, as guided by the UK Equality Act (2010), to make ‘reasonable adjustments’ for candidates with special educational needs (SEN), disability, illness or injury. Where a candidate would otherwise be at a substantial disadvantage in comparison to a candidate with no SEN, disability, illness or injury, we may be able to agree pre-examination access arrangements. These arrangements help a candidate by minimising accessibility barriers and maximising their opportunity to demonstrate their knowledge, skills and understanding in an assessment.

Important:

- Requested access arrangements should be based on evidence of the candidate’s barrier to assessment and should also reflect their normal way of working at school; this is in line with the *Cambridge Handbook* www.cambridgeinternational.org/eoguide
- For Cambridge International to approve an access arrangement, we will need to agree that it constitutes a reasonable adjustment, involves reasonable cost and timeframe and does not affect the security and integrity of the assessment.
- Availability of access arrangements should be checked by centres at the start of the course. Details of our standard access arrangements and modified question papers are available in the *Cambridge Handbook* www.cambridgeinternational.org/eoguide
- Please contact us at the start of the course to find out if we are able to approve an arrangement that is not included in the list of standard access arrangements.
- Candidates who cannot access parts of the assessment may be able to receive an award based on the parts they have completed.

After the exam

Grading and reporting

Grades 9, 8, 7, 6, 5, 4, 3, 2 or 1 indicate the standard a candidate achieved at Cambridge IGCSE (9–1).

9 is the highest and 1 is the lowest. ‘Ungraded’ means that the candidate’s performance did not meet the standard required for grade 1. ‘Ungraded’ is reported on the statement of results but not on the certificate.

In specific circumstances your candidates may see one of the following letters on their statement of results:

- Q (PENDING)
- X (NO RESULT).

These letters do not appear on the certificate.

On the statement of results and certificates, Cambridge IGCSE is shown as INTERNATIONAL GENERAL CERTIFICATE OF SECONDARY EDUCATION (IGCSE).

How students and teachers can use the grades

Assessment at Cambridge IGCSE has two purposes:

- 1 to measure learning and achievement
The assessment confirms achievement and performance in relation to the knowledge, understanding and skills specified in the syllabus, to the levels described in the grade descriptions.
- 2 to show likely future success
The outcomes help predict which students are well prepared for a particular course or career and/or which students are more likely to be successful.
The outcomes help students choose the most suitable course or career.

Grade descriptions

Grade descriptions are provided to give an indication of the standards of achievement candidates awarded particular grades are likely to show. Weakness in one aspect of the examination may be balanced by a better performance in some other aspect.

Changes to this syllabus for 2025

The syllabus has been updated. This is version 1, published September 2022.

You must read the whole syllabus before planning your teaching programme. We review our syllabuses regularly to make sure they continue to meet the needs of our schools. In updating this syllabus, we have made it easier for teachers and students to understand, keeping the familiar features that teachers and schools value.

Changes to syllabus content

- The set works and world focus for 2025 have been updated in section 4 Details of the assessment of the syllabus.
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Significant changes to the syllabus are indicated by black vertical lines either side of the text.

Any textbooks endorsed to support the syllabus for examination from 2015 are still suitable for use with this syllabus.



School feedback: ‘While studying Cambridge IGCSE and Cambridge International A Levels, students broaden their horizons through a global perspective and develop a lasting passion for learning.’

Feedback from: Zhai Xiaoning, Deputy Principal, The High School Affiliated to Renmin University of China

We are committed to making our documents accessible in accordance with the WCAG 2.1 Standard. We are always looking to improve the accessibility of our documents. If you find any problems or you think we are not meeting accessibility requirements, contact us at info@cambridgeinternational.org with the subject heading: Digital accessibility. If you need this document in a different format, contact us and supply your name, email address and requirements and we will respond within 15 working days.

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